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HEADLINE: IN 6TH, VETERAN VS. NEWCOMER;
KUSHNERICK HOPES TO THWART ANOTHER STATE SENATE WIN BY STONE;
MARYLAND VOTES 2006

BYLINE: Laura Barnhardt, sun reporter

BODY:

State Sen. Norman R. Stone Jr. sometimes jokes about the length of time he's been in public office.

"It's been a great four years," he quipped at a candidates forum in Dundalk before the primary election.

The crowd laughed, knowing that Stone has been in the state legislature more than four decades - longer than other Maryland state senator.

Stone, a 71-year-old lawyer from Edgemere, has won 11 straight elections. In November, Stone's challenge comes from Bill "Kush" Kushnerick, a 55-year-old mechanic from Essex.

A Republican who has never before run for office, Kushnerick has no money or political organization to help with his campaign in the 6th District, which covers Dundalk, most of Essex and part of Rosedale. He has no billboards, no mailers, no fliers, T-shirts or any other advertisement except a handwritten sign in the window of his apartment in an Essex rowhouse.

"I'm just a regular guy who thinks something needs to be done," said Kushnerick.

Kushnerick, who annually decorates a Christmas tree in his yard in honor of American troops, says his main concerns are the economy; improving the salaries of teachers, police officers and firefighters; and raising the state's minimum wage. Kushnerick, who is disabled, says he also wants to improve the plight of chronic-pain patients, such as himself, by relaxing laws that he says prohibit doctors from prescribing narcotics as often as they might otherwise.

Stone says he still has a lot to offer. "We've got a long way to go with revitalization," he says. And, he says, "It seems that there's always something to fight down here."

Chief among his concerns, Stone says, is keeping a proposed liquefied natural gas facility from locating at

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Sparrows Point. "It's not something that would be good for this community," says Stone, adding that since an 87-mile pipeline extending from Sparrows Point to southern Pennsylvania would be needed, it makes more sense to build the facility closer to Philadelphia.

If re-elected, Stone says, he'd work to toughen penalties for sex offenders. Stone co-sponsored Maryland's version of Megan's Law in 1995, requiring police to keep a registry of offenders and to tell neighborhood groups when a sex offender moves nearby, and Jessica's Law this year, which calls for mandatory sentences for certain types of sex offenders and requires convicted sex offenders to submit DNA samples, register with parole authorities and be supervised for periods from three years to life.

Stone also said he'd work to fund education initiatives and projects such as Dundalk's Heritage Trail.

In the race for the three seats in the House of Delegates representing the 6th District, Democratic Dels. Joseph J. "Sonny" Minnick and Mike H. Weir Jr. are running for re-election. Del. John A. Olszewski Jr., who was appointed to the House this year, is also seeking election, after receiving more votes than any candidate in the primary.

Olszewski, a 24-year-old high school teacher, is the son of Baltimore County Councilman John Olszewski Sr. If elected, he says, he would work to fund school renovations and expansions and to give veteran teachers "incentives" to work in more challenging schools.

Minnick, a 73-year-old restaurant owner, says he wants to look into bringing a version of Massachusetts' health care reforms to Maryland. And he says he would work to lower closing costs for homebuyers and give more tax breaks for employers who offer child care to employees.

Weir, a 58-year-old captain in the Fire Department who is seeking a second term, says he would work to require county governments to adhere to long-term development plans and build roads and schools before new houses are built. Weir's father was a delegate representing the Dundalk area for 28 years.

The Republican challengers are Steve Dishon, a 53-year-old sales manager and engineer at a scale company; Paul M. Blitz, a 43-year-old teacher; and Richard W. Metzgar, a 52-year-old associate pastor and car dealership manager.

Metzgar says he would work to improve pensions for teachers, strengthen Jessica's Law and cap taxes for seniors.

Blitz, an Army Reserve sergeant who has run for the House twice before, said he would work to attract technology and research companies to the area. He said he's concerned about the loss of industrial and manufacturing jobs in the district.

Dishon, who has a Web site and regularly attends community meetings, is the most organized and has raised the most money of the three challengers - about \$8,000, according to the most recent campaign finance reports. He says if elected he would work to plan better for future development.

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6th DISTRICT CANDIDATES

State Senate

Name:

Norman R. Stone Jr.

Democrat

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Age:

71

Address:

Edgemere

Education:

University of Baltimore, University of Baltimore School of Law, 1960

Occupation:

Lawyer

Political experience:

Elected to House of Delegates in 1962, served one term; elected to state Senate in 1966, re-elected 10 times

Name:

Bill "Kush" Kushnerick

Republican

Age:

55

Address:

Essex

Education:

Dundalk High School, 1970, some college

Occupation:

Mechanic

House of Delegates

Name:

Joseph J. "Sonny" Minnick

Democrat

Age:

73

Address:

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Dundalk

Education:

Dundalk High School, 1952, some college

Occupation:

Restaurant owner

Political experience:

Member of the House of Delegates 1987 to 1990 and 1995 to 2006; member of Battle Grove Democratic Club,
member of Seventh District Democratic Club

Name:

John A. Olszewski Jr.

Democrat

Age:

24

Address:

Dundalk

Education:

Goucher College, 2004, master's degree from George Washington University, 2005

Occupation:

Teacher

Political experience:

Student member of the Baltimore County Board of Education; member of the Democratic Central Committee;
appointed to House of Delegates in 2006

Name:

Michael H. Weir Jr.

Democrat

Age:

58

Address:

Essex

IN 6TH, VETERAN VS. NEWCOMER; KUSHNERICK HOPES TO THWART ANOTHER STATE SENATE WIN
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Education:

Kenwood High School, 1966, University of Baltimore, 1980

Occupation:

Fire Department captain

Political experience:

Elected to House of Delegates in 2002; served as manager of father's campaigns; member of Chesapeake Bay Commission

Name:

Paul M. Blitz

Republican

Age:

43

Address:

Essex

Education:

Towson University, 1985

Occupation:

Teacher

Political experience:

Ran unsuccessfully for House of Delegates in 1998 and 2002

Name:

Steve Dishon

Republican

Age:

53

Address:

Dundalk

Education:

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Dundalk High School in 1971, some college, various technical schools

Occupation:

Sales manager and engineer

Political experience:

Former member of the Riverside Democratic Club, worked on various campaigns

Name:

Richard W. Metzgar

Republican

Age:

52

Address:

Essex

Education:

Kenwood High School in 1973, some college

Occupation:

Car dealership manager, associate pastor

GRAPHIC: Photo(s)

1. GOP candidate Bill "Kush" Kushnerick of Essex says he's a regular guy who wants change. 2. Democratic Sen. Norman R. Stone Jr. says he has a lot to offer voters.

1. Steve Ruark : special to the sun 2. E. Malby : sun photographer

LOAD-DATE: October 22, 2006